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ABSTRACT

A symposium addressing the needs of uprooted migrant and refugee children and the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in meeting those needs took place at Wingspread, Racine, Wisconsin in November, 1978. Uprooted children are those migrant and refugee children who have lost their identity as the result of being forced, for socioeconomic, political, or religious reasons, to live in a foreign country. They have not absorbed the shock of the change and have not established ties in their new surroundings. Participants in the symposium were selected for their special experience with migrant children in both receiving and sending countries of Europe and North America. Participants represented governments, international and national social service agencies, and intergovernmental agencies, such as UNICEF. One group of participants dealt with questions regarding governments -- their legislation and regulations, attitudes, understanding or lack of it, apathy, and relationship with NGOs. The second group discussed issues within the NGO world relating to experiences, activities, and programs. Both groups dealt with problems as viewed by NGOs. Contents of the symposium report describe the background to the symposium, characterize the discussions held, explore the relationship of NGOs to governmental agencies and the private sector, and list general recommendations as well as many specific recommendations for action. The brief working paper prepared for the symposium is appended. (RH)

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UPROOTED CHILDREN

Migrants and Refugees

The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations

A Wingspread Conference
in observance of

International Year of the Child

convened by

The Committee of Nongovernmental Organizations
for the International Year of the Child
and
The United States Committee for UNICEF

in cooperation with

The Johnson Foundation

November 1978

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Report prepared by
Kate Katzki

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FOREWORD

The Johnson Foundation (Racine, Wisconsin) cooperated with the Committee of Nongovernmental Organizations for the International Year of the Child and the United States Committee for UNICEF in the Wingspread Conference on Uprooted Children.

Since the United Nations General Assembly voted to designate 1979 as the year in which the objective is to "heighten awareness of the state of children throughout the world," The Johnson Foundation has examined many areas in which a meaningful contribution to this goal could be made. The concept of the International Year of the Child stemmed from nongovernmental initiative. It was, therefore, fitting that a Wingspread conference be developed with the leaders and the specialists from the voluntary sector of society.

In dealing with subjects relating to children it is all too easy to conclude that we cannot understand their world, therefore to shrug off their emotional and physical needs and fail to contribute to their greater wholeness as individuals. Or the route may be taken that leads adults to shield children from the complex human issues that will confront them as young adults and later in life. Either direction taken can give added force to the comment: "children are in a state of poverty, whether it is physical poverty or emotional poverty which comes from the neglect of parents."

Wisely, the planning committee for the Wingspread conference decided to concentrate on one area of concern: the uprooted child. It was established that relatively little has been done to improve their condition. Each of us will recognize the strong focus which is now being placed on the uprooted child because of the tragic and high visibility given these children (and their families) who are being up-

rooted from their homes and cultures in Asia.

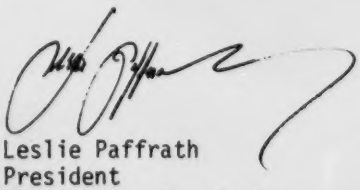
For children whose identity is lost because they have no roots in their culture or a new one there must be deep concern and a determination to act on their behalf. Each child lost is a casualty for humanity as a whole. When this occurs, we will never know what contribution to society might have been made by one of these wandering children. We are unfortunately, aware of the loss when they become a liability for society.

Not all of them, or all of us, can achieve renown because of contributions to science, the arts, government, education or other public endeavor. However, all of these children, as is true of each of us, are entitled to the opportunity to strive for an enhanced quality of life, and contribute to it.

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted in November, 1959 by the General Assembly of the United Nations contains the following passage:

"Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give."

By meeting together at Wingspread to consider measures to alleviate the condition of uprooted children and to try to find solutions for their plight, the participants have sent signals to governments and nongovernmental institutions that the condition of these children deserves their serious attention and their determination to act positively. Certainly no less can be asked of us if we are to continue to act on the assumption that children are our most valuable resource.



Leslie Paffrath
President
The Johnson Foundation

INTRODUCTION

A Symposium on uprooted children took place at Wingspread, Racine, Wisconsin in November, 1978. It was convened by the Committee of Nongovernmental Organizations for the International Year of the Child (NGO/IYC Committee) with the assistance of the United States Committee for UNICEF, in cooperation with The Johnson Foundation. This Wingspread Symposium was part of a world-wide effort to place the child at the center of attention.

Many of the billion and a half children living in the world today remain beyond the reach of even a minimum of services, lacking nutritious food, access to education, and basic health care. At the same time, countless children are suffering the effects of neglect and have become victims of abuse and exploitation. Their cause has struck a responsive chord in the international community. Thus the United Nations designated 1979 as the International Year of the Child. Each country has been called upon to consider the situation of its own children and children of other countries and to launch new efforts to meet both immediate and long-range needs. The response has been overwhelming.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) -- private, voluntary, and professional organizations -- having played a leading role in launching the International Year of the Child have been particularly innovative in advocating and initiating a wide range of programs to take stock of existing needs, to study prevailing attitudes, to search for solutions, and to plan and encourage activities which will benefit children the world over. NGOs have been very much involved not only in preparations for the Year but also in implementing some of the programs proposed by the United Nations and in influencing the development of other programs at both international and national levels.

At the international level NGOs have joined together to form the NGO/IYC Committee to look at children's needs and problems that cross national boundaries and lend themselves to international cooperation. Part of the Committee's effort has been attention devoted to those areas where attention has been lacking. The problems of uprooted children constitute one such area. While governmental and nongovernmental agencies have been concerned with the problems of refugee and migrant families, little has been done with respect to the effects of uprooting on children. What do we know about the needs of those who have been uprooted from their home country, home environment, or families, either because they are children of families seeking asylum, of permanent immigrants, or of migrant workers? What is the responsibility of their receiving country? What do we know about the condition of being uprooted? Do all these children suffer from it? What can NGOs do to effect necessary changes? The Wingspread Symposium was designed as a first step to fill this gap.

Participants in the Symposium, selected for their special experience with migrant children in both receiving and sending countries of Europe and North America, came from Vienna, Stockholm, Geneva, Paris, Ottawa, San Antonio, New York, and Chicago. They represented governments, international and national social service agencies, and intergovernmental agencies, such as UNICEF.

The NGO/IYC Committee is deeply grateful for the encouragement, support, and consideration afforded by Leslie Paffrath, President of The Johnson Foundation, Rita Goodman, Vice President-Area Programs, and their colleagues.

The substance of the Symposium program and its preparation represent a considerable achievement by Mildred Jones, Executive Officer, NGO/IYC Committee, New York, Ingrid Gelinek, Secretary-General, International Council on Social

Welfare, who prepared the working paper, and Kate Katzki, Symposium Chairman and writer of this report.

All of us who helped to plan and arrange the Wingspread Symposium are proud of its achievements and hope that this report will serve as a stimulus for further action, not only by NGOs, but by governments and intergovernmental agencies as well.

Joseph Moerman
Chairman
NGO/IYC Committee

Helaine K. Plaut
Vice-Chairman
NGO/IYC Committee

International Year of the Child 1979

Joseph Moerman, Ingrid Gelinek, Kate Katzki

THE BACKGROUND

While governmental and nongovernmental agencies (NGOs) have been concerned with problems of refugee and migrant families, relatively little has been done regarding the effect of these problems on children. What about children who become uprooted because they are migrants or refugees? What about youngsters who accompany their migrant families? And what about children who are left behind by their families? What do we know about them? Are all these children "uprooted"?

The NGO/IYC Committee deemed these questions sufficiently important to warrant a study of the plight of children uprooted through their migration or refugee status. The Committee was especially keen on investigating what NGOs could do in this particular situation.

With the assistance of the United States Committee for UNICEF and in cooperation with The Johnson Foundation, a three-day Symposium was held at Wingspread in Racine, Wisconsin, November 17-19, 1978. International experts from North America and Europe, selected because of their knowledge and experience in work with refugees and migrants, met to discuss steps that need to be taken to help children who have lost their roots and who need to regain their stability.

While most participants were connected with NGOs or governments, they attended the Symposium as individuals and not as representatives of their organizations. Several participants had expertise with ethnic and religious groups, some were child-care specialists. Each individual's experience enriched the discussions enormously.

A preparatory group had established the parameters and selected issues with which the expert group could reasonably deal, given the limited time and resources of the Symposium. It had been decided to focus the discussion on receiving

countries in Western Europe and North America, although it was hoped that many of the findings would be instructive and useful in other parts of the world. Migration within a country and migration back to the home country were to be excluded, although of course it was unavoidable that some references would be made to these aspects.

Kate Katzki, Chairman of the Symposium, opened the discussions. While the size of the problem is not exactly known, there is ample proof that the number of uprooted migrant and refugee children is considerable and that their difficulties are serious. It is also a fact that relatively little has been done to study and improve their situation. It was expected, therefore, that the Symposium would examine the problems, their causes and possible solutions.

The working paper for the Symposium had been prepared by Ingrid Gelinek, Secretary-General of the International Council on Social Welfare. It had been distributed to participants in advance and served as a basis for discussion. (The working paper appears as Appendix I.) The paper recognized that not all migrant and refugee children are uprooted. Uprooted children are those who have lost their identity, who no longer have roots in their home country, their traditions and former environment. They have not absorbed the shock of the change, and have not established ties in their new surroundings.

Contrary to frequent popular assumptions, migration and refugee status per se are not automatically problems and do not lead necessarily to uprootedness. Why do some children lose their roots while othersadjust well? It was hoped that this expert group would identify the nature of some of the issues, clarify and explore how to deal with some of the problem areas, and present policy and action proposals for NGOs. It was expected that the discussions would identify needs in the fields of research and policy formation and

would suggest directions toward innovative methods for planning and action.

Participants were divided into two groups. One dealt with questions regarding governments -- their legislation and regulations, attitudes, understanding or lack of it, apathy, relationship with NGOs. The second group was more NGO-oriented. It discussed issues within the NGO world, experiences, activities, programs. Both groups dealt with the problems as viewed by NGOs. Plenary sessions gave both groups an opportunity to review the results of their differently focused discussions.

EXPLORATIONS

Discussions were centered on existing problems connected with migration and refugee status and explored backgrounds which may lead to uprootedness. Although reference is made to "temporary" and "permanent" migration and what role one or the other plays in the adjustment of children, it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish between them. Persons who intend to leave their home country for a specific length of time often prolong their absence; others who leave "permanently" return home when economic or political conditions change in the country of origin or in their new place of residence. Frequently, the result is permanent uncertainty, a symptom which makes itself felt in children who accompany their families. Nowadays, migrants visit their home country more frequently than in the past, thus maintaining a closer tie with their original surroundings. That may be disturbing to children, who find the possibilities for identification somewhat puzzling.

Permanent or temporary migration may be considered voluntary. The move of refugees is usually involuntary. It is frequently a political necessity, but may also be economically motivated. Is the effect on children different?

Whether as migrant or as refugee, usually the child neither participates in the family's decision nor is properly prepared for the departure from the home country. Later, when the question arises regarding a possible return home or an onward move, the child, again, remains outside the decision-making process, with no explanations for the change given. This may create considerable anxiety. The parents' struggle for adjustment, the insecurity connected with it, the child's lack of stability and understanding, spoil easily the soil in which healthy roots can grow.

Uncertainty exists not only among migrants and refugees, it is apparent also among government planners and policy-makers. Indeterminacy appears regarding their objectives and approaches: Should they strive toward assimilation or adaptation or integration of the newcomer? Should they help the newcomer merge completely into the mainstream of the country? Is the newcomer expected to integrate while preserving some features of the past? Or should the newcomer adapt to the new society while retaining most of his familiar traditions? And to what extent will he meet the expectations of the host country and its government? The same uncertainty is apparent among the general population.

Many pressures that did not exist at home present themselves in the new country, especially for children. A new language has to be mastered, a new culture must be faced, new ways of life may be required. The family arrives under stress; the child is part of these syndromes and often cannot cope with them. Eventually, many children will be unable to master the language of the new country which within the family circle is often little spoken, if at all.

Uprooted children feel displaced, isolated, unable to communicate adequately or to understand the changes that have taken place in their lives. Even the second generation can face crucial problems of uprootedness. Parents may decide to return home while the children, who feel they are by now part of the host country, wish to remain, or are conflicted about a possible return.

NGOS AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Issues relating to governments, their policies and actions, received intensive consideration at the Wingspread Symposium. The concept of "government" was interpreted in the broadest sense to include any activity by the public sector on national, regional, or local levels regarding migrant and refugee children.

Government policies, usually dictated by economic and political considerations, often change and are difficult for the newcomer to understand. Frequently, new demands on migrants are made without sufficient explanation in understandable language.

Attitudes of different countries and their governments toward newcomers vary. In Canada and Sweden, for instance, government has strongly supported the preservation of cultural values and traditions of newcomers. The "Canadian mosaic" allows immigrants to retain their cultural identity. Government funds have been made available to support foreign language publications, to establish bilingual schooling, and so forth. In the United States, the first immigrants were able to assimilate because ethnically they were indistinguishable from the settled population. Their features were similar, their customs hardly differed. With the arrival of non-European immigrants, the problem of assimilation arose, and it became clear that the theory of the "melting pot" no longer worked. Then in the 1960s came the "renaissance of ethnicity", and public recognition and sanction of the multicultural society, part of which consisted of multi-ethnic groups.

What could be done by governmental institutions in receiving countries to facilitate the adjustment of migrant and refugee children over a period of time?

Perspective on Needs

The need for basic services on all levels was recognized in the fields of education, health, and leisure-time activities. Children as well as adults may require special attention if they are to make satisfactory adjustments in a new country. Certain groups may receive more services than others, especially among refugees. Undocumented aliens have no access to many services, though the need among them may be especially great.

A recent decision by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas affirmed the right of undocumented alien children to a public education. (Sept. 14, 1978: J. and R. Doe et al. v. James Plyler et al. Civil Action Number TY-77-261-CA.) This important decision by a federal court of the United States could serve as an example for other countries.

The need to learn a new language was recognized by the Symposium as an important factor in the lives of children. Schools provide opportunities to a varied degree. Government policies vary in regard to the advisability of a child's retaining his native language. While it has been recognized that retention of ethnic identity is not a governmental responsibility, the experts regarded it as desirable and felt that government should facilitate it. The question arose, however, as to what extent emphasis on ethnic differences creates divisiveness within a society, including the political arena where ethnic groups may compete with each other for political power, rather than sharing in common concern for issues.

To what extent will easing "culture shock" reduce the number of uprooted children? It seems that children adjust more easily to new surrounding than adults, especially the mother in the family. She is often the last family member

to accept new customs. But a child's adjustment may be only on the surface. Through he attends school with native-born children, though he plays on the same playground, he frequently plays only within his own ethnic group, and no attempt to mix is made by either side.

The child returns from school to a home which adheres to old traditions, which are quite different from cultural patterns in the new society. Behavior expected within the home may differ greatly from that expected outside. Conflicts of identity may easily arise within a youngster. The child may open himself to the new society, adopt its life style, yet may feel that he is not part of it; and his parents remain outside it.

While small children remain more easily within the circle of their customary culture, adolescents frequently are troubled by the differences in customs and values. Even when they become nationals of a country, they often feel different from the rest of the population. The process of adjustment may be slower than it appears.

Refugee children often have an additional burden to carry. Frequently they have witnessed persecution, torture, and death before and during their flight. The family may have become separated. And when finally they reach a country of refuge, they may be faced with rejection. Added to the burden may be fear about the right to stay, fear of threats that they will have to return, worries about family members and friends left behind. The child's reaction may reflect the family's concern.

Does the school, does the public, realize the burden carried by these families?

The need to identify with something of the past seems to be apparent. Retaining some of the traditional values seems to be a source of inner strength. It may take several generations for a multicultural society to become a

solid entity, a blend of newly encountered and old established cultures. Meanwhile, expectations may differ greatly from reality. What does the newcomer expect from the host country? Do unmet expectations destroy roots? Can NGOs help to conserve children's roots or, where needed, help to establish roots? If so, what can NGOs do to alleviate the situation?

What Should Be Done?

NGOs face a vast field of possible activities in connection with governmental procedures. They could be helpful in training personnel of public services that deal with migrants and refugees, orienting them toward acceptance of special needs. Certain branches of public services are particularly apt to have to deal with migrant children, for instance education and health services (teachers, physicians, nurses, etc.), social services, police and others. NGOs have the responsibility to share their specialized knowledge with the public sector. They may have to insist on being heard by government. Citizens' action may be required to obtain results. It is up to NGOs to arouse and channel the compassion of citizens so that government recognizes its obligation and acts accordingly.

Information and communication services require trained personnel. Government could take a leading part in planning and funding such staff training. It is also important to offer training to members of the migrant community in order to familiarize them with regulations, customs, and attitudes of public institutions. In Canada, for instance, the government provides financial support to neighborhood centers and to various groups for training programs and similar services. Special day care activities are extended to migrant children.

Information on available services and agencies should be presented in a more personalized manner than is usually the case, when necessary be given individually. Language

and vocabulary should be understandable to the newcomer. Such procedures could reduce feelings of alienation, induce feelings of security, and reduce the danger of uprootedness.

Existing systems of communication and information call for improvement. Insufficient contact between NGOs and government results in misunderstanding about each other's role, as well as insufficient knowledge of migrants or refugees and their particular problems; it may also prevent the newcomer from learning about available resources, governmental as well as nongovernmental.

It is desirable for certain information to reach the migrant before he leaves his home country and to be available after his arrival in the new country. Too often services are available, but information about them is not distributed or distribution is so poorly coordinated that it does not reach the people for whom it is intended.

Policies, especially those of governments, are sometimes ambiguous, even ambivalent. Lack of precision may be due to the fact that future plans are uncertain. Temporary migrants may become permanent settlers; situations may exist where migrants are welcome but immigrants are unwanted. Policies reflect such uncertainties and, as a result, are often not as clear-cut as they might be.

Immigration policies should enable families to remain united. Separation of family members should be avoided. NGOs should stress these principles and urge governments to structure their laws and regulations accordingly. NGOs can help by encouraging governments in this direction. NGOs can assist migrants in regularizing their status, if that is needed. Special knowledge of laws and regulations is necessary in order to provide such services.

NGOs can contribute to government policy and planning by representing the social and human aspects of the problem, by adding the "social dimension" to economic and political considerations.

While monitoring government policies and practices, NGOs should also evaluate governmental procedures. In order to facilitate adjustment of migrants and refugees there should be better communication and understanding between governments and NGOs, between migrants and governments, among governments internationally. If newcomers sense understanding and acceptance by the bureaucracy, it may be possible to reduce or avoid uncertainty and uprootedness.

The International Labor Organization (ILO), an intergovernmental agency with equal representation of government, employers, and employees of member countries, has repeatedly expressed its concern about the situation of migrant workers and has submitted to its governing body and to other United Nations agencies recommendations of measures against abusive conditions and for promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment. NGOs will want to refer to this material and use it in their contacts with government and private agencies.

NGOS AND THE COMMUNITY

While the roles of government and NGOs frequently overlap, certain needs can be met best by the private sector.

Cultural Concerns

NGOs can play a unique role by working with both the newcomers and the settled population, bringing them together so that they can know each other better. National and local NGOs have groups or individuals in their memberships who can plan events that involve migrants and refugees along with persons who have roots in the community and who can be called upon to make new arrivals feel welcome.

What image does a migrant child have of himself? In a sense, he is living in a marginal situation; he is not a full member of the community. He feels strange in his new home while feeling estranged from his old one. Help is needed to alleviate this situation which has an impact on his self-image and, possibly, on his self-respect. The need for mutual education of the receiving community and of the migrant community is obvious; barriers have to be broken down, mutual understanding has to be promoted.

An important part in this effort can be played by the child welfare system, which should strive toward a thorough understanding of the situation and an adjustment of concepts and practices so that the specific cultural background of the migrant and refugee children with whom contacts are made are adequately understood and taken into account.

On the other hand, migrant groups can make an important and positive impact on the settled community, not only in the economic field, but culturally too. Their presence can promote intercultural understanding and tolerance. They may effect different approaches in education. Their own support system may strengthen the structure of a community.

There is considerable controversy about "cultural education" for migrant children, what it should include and to what extent it should incorporate values and customs of the past. It seems evident that migrant children have special educational needs. Every effort should be made to acquaint them with the new culture to which they have been transplanted. Such educational efforts require special knowledge of the child's native culture, and sympathetic understanding, not only from the educator but also from private and government agencies, and from the community at large. There is need for understanding the significance of migration and its impact on the child.

The role of volunteers must be emphasized. The importance of their understanding and acceptance seems to be understood. But acceptance often becomes difficult, and understanding close to impossible. However, volunteers, properly trained, can serve as important links between newcomers and their surroundings. Volunteers can learn to interpret to migrants the ways of living in the new country, ways which are so familiar to those who have grown up with them, and so strange to those who are new to them. Volunteers, properly trained, can also explain the strangers' ways to the settled population; they can elucidate the outsiders' traditions and values.

Religious and spiritual needs different from those of the settled population require respect and recognition.

Facilitating Adjustment

Contacts and exchanges with other ethnic groups, especially among leaders, can help toward adjustment in new surroundings. The influence of leaders may be a positive factor. Some groups arrive with strong built-in support mechanisms; others may benefit from developing such forces. Shared experiences and exchange of impressions are aids to adjustment.

Premigration counseling, while recommended by many agencies, is rarely undertaken. Children might adjust better to new surroundings if culture shock were diminished by better preparation. International NGOs can play a leading role in this endeavor. The use of teachers from the home community may possibly reduce later uprootedness.

What should the receiving country undertake in order to better assist newcomers in their adjustment? How much and in which areas is cooperation needed between sending and receiving countries? How much exists, how much needs to be initiated? While some information is available, and various assumptions are made regarding the process of resettlement, it is apparent that there is need for research, especially concerning the cause of uprootedness in children and how to deal with it.

Locally, small organizations and groups can initiate programs which assist migrants and their children to become acquainted with the community. Activities such as outings and other social events which enable the newcomer to mingle with established residents on an equal basis may help to overcome social barriers, and may contribute toward a better adjustment. Religious groups, neighborhood associations, social clubs could establish programs geared toward better understanding and cooperation among the new and established residents.

On the national level, NGOs can make their voice heard in a variety of fields. They can approach national groups which are frequently unacquainted with requirements and customs regarding migrants and refugees. Mass media have not been sufficiently utilized in this educational process. They can supplement information. They can effectively be a source of explanations to the settled population and to the newcomer. Television, radio, and newspapers can help interpret for the general public what seems foreign and difficult to understand.

In spite of efforts to accommodate the migrant and refugee within the new community, governmental and private sectors often do not recognize adequately the special problems with which the newcomer has to cope. Awareness of these special needs and more sensitive orientation to the special problems of migrants and refugees should contribute to smoother adjustment. Frequently, existing service systems are insufficiently geared to the needs of migrants and refugees, and sometimes they are insensitive to the particular problems arising from the special situation and needs of migrant or refugee children.

The problem of child exploitation was discussed. It is particularly evident in agriculture and in domestic services. Too little is publicly known about the abuse of migrant children. Their exploitation is sometimes tantamount to slavery. The group felt that this was an extremely important subject which required special but separate attention.

International adoption was recognized as another serious problem, but it was not pursued at this Symposium, partly because of lack of time and partly because special seminars and expert meetings are planned on the subject. The United Nations General Assembly will give this question special attention in 1979.

International Year
of the Child 1979

PARTICIPANTS AT THE WINGSPREAD CONFERENCE

Left: Sylva Gelber, Roy Plaut, Mildred Jones, Clara J. Swan, Sheila Barry, Rosalind Harris

Center: Carla Berry, Alba Zizzamia, Kathleen Cravero, Joseph Moerman, Gail DeMeyer, Helaine Plaut

Lower Left: Alicia Salinas, Karl-Erik Stromberg

Lower Right: Helaine Plaut, Sydney Talisman, Ruud van Hoogevest, Monique Esnard, Kate Katzki

-- photographs by Tom Anger

THE OUTCOME

The experts had set themselves the following goals:

1. Presentation of factors that lead to uprootedness

2. Identification of areas of special needs and suggestions of possible ways to meet them

3. Policy and/or action recommendations for NGOs and other organizations with consideration of possible recommendations for changes in NGO activities

4. Examination of the use of research and the contribution it might make toward eliminating uprootedness.

Migrant and refugee children share certain problems, although not all of them are uprooted. Uprootedness is described as a loss of cultural identity, confusion about one's belonging, one's ties. This confusion is expressed in children's attitudes regarding their new and previous cultural surroundings, in conflicts between expectations from the new surroundings compared to, and based on, previous traditions and customs.

Several problem areas and conflicting situations contribute toward uprootedness. Tension within families, rejection or resentment by the receiving country, insecurity of migrant or refugee status, and isolation, especially of parents, affect the self-image of the child. Prejudice

encountered and the lingering effects of earlier traumatic experiences increase a child's inability to maintain or develop roots.

The child was viewed in relation to the family and the community. The importance of assistance to entire families was recognized, to give support where necessary and thus facilitate the child's adaptation.

The need for preventive strategies and services was stressed, as the social and human aspects of the problem were underlined. In addition to purely legal and administrative measures, this may require a whole new approach based on human needs.

THE FIELD OF ACTION

It is necessary for NGOs to become increasingly involved in preventive activities which, whenever possible, should start in the country of origin.

The focus on uprooted children must include consideration of family and community and their role in avoiding syndromes of uprootedness. The family's adaptation facilitates the adaptation of the children. Gradually enlarging contact with others favors good adjustment.

Awareness of past mistakes could serve as a warning for the future. Past experiences made in times of crisis should serve as examples. Long-term strategies should be developed. For instance, Australia and New Zealand are formulating plans in advance for a possible influx of immigrants from Southern Africa. Based on previous experience, it is known that certain problems arise, especially in crisis situations, which seem to give evidence of certain patterns. Yet, each time a crisis arises, there is confusion and indecision as to how best to proceed. Perhaps the time has come to remind the international community of existing conventions regarding refugees and migrants, and also of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. Perhaps the time is also ripe for establishing an International Code of Conduct.

Often laws concerning refugees and migrants do not take into account unaccompanied minors. NGOs have been unable to act as efficiently as necessary concerning these situations.

It is not enough that governments establish and duly apply rules and regulations. Social aspects need to be taken into consideration, especially in dealing with migrants and refugees. These groups have special needs which should be recognized by policy makers and planners of health, education, social services, community centers, the juridical

establishments, etc. It is not enough to provide what is due by law; a new approach is needed that is based on social considerations, that takes into account the specific needs of migrants and refugees.

Better communication is needed not only between governments and migrants but also between the general public and migrant groups. NGOs can play a very important role in this process. They have the means to relate to the grass-roots level, they can reach out to the small community, they can lend a voice to many small groups, so that they can be heard by a wider public.

Exchange of knowledge and experiences between receiving and sending countries will lead to greater awareness and understanding of underlying problems and, we hope, to preventive steps.

NGOs should assist locally, nationally, and internationally by speaking of needs and experiences. Their voice should be heard and should be influential in the development of meaningful programs.

General Recommendations

The following general recommendations were made based on the recognition of unmet needs:

1. There should be training or orientation of those who serve migrant children, such as teachers, physicians, nurses, social workers, and volunteers in various settings. Persons working with newcomers, especially in the public sector, are often insufficiently sensitized to their needs. Training through workshops could be given by nongovernmental agencies experienced and successful in working with migrants and refugees.

2. Migrants should be consulted about what they see as their needs, using the built-in support system of the migrant community. Leaders within the migrant community should be involved in policy or program formulation, exchange of experiences should be encouraged, coalition action should be encouraged around issues of common concern.

3. Attention should be given to religious and spiritual needs, especially where there are sharp differences between those of the migrant child and of the receiving community.

4. Government policies should be designed to deal with unaccompanied minors. The present lack of government policy inhibits the ability of NGOs to help with this particular problem. Attention to the situation of the individual child should be given wherever possible.

5. Premigration orientation should be planned whenever possible. Receiving governments should have qualified personnel in offices where persons who intend to migrate make their first contacts.

6. Establishment of criteria or a statement of principles regarding needs of migrant and refugee children should be pursued on national and international levels.

7. A follow-up and evaluation mechanism should be established.

8. Exploitation of children, especially as farm laborers and in domestic service, should be examined. This is a serious issue which could not receive sufficient attention by the conference group but which was considered important enough to be mentioned in this report.

9. During International Year of the Child, national commissions must be made aware of the need for active involvement in work on behalf of uprooted children. NGOs must make themselves heard through national commissions, and they must seek action on behalf of children who are deprived of stability and security, and whose plight is too little known by others.

Action Recommendations

Specific action proposals were formulated by the Symposium which could result in better adjustment of migrants and refugees and could, consequently, be expected to aid in reducing the number of uprooted children. The following special recommendations were made:

1. International, National, and Local Action

International. At the international level, needs of migrant and refugee children should be brought to the attention of various groups, especially the Advisory Group for IYC (International Year of the Child), UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), ICEM (International Commission for European Migration), and ICVA (International Council for Voluntary Agencies).

It was noted that ICEM will have a conference on this subject in 1979. It was suggested that NGO participation be assured and that NGOs make recommendations for the agenda, in case there are gaps. It was also suggested that a

position paper be presented which would include references to ongoing and potential activities of nongovernmental agencies.

It was recommended that NGOs be made aware of two instruments which were adopted by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in June, 1975: the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143) and the Recommendation concerning Migrant Workers, 1975 (No. 151). The aims of these instruments are, among others,

> "the promotion of effective equality of opportunity and treatment....the adoption and implementation of a social policy for migrants which emphasizes: (a) the reunification of families; (b) minimum measures to protect the health of migrant workers; (c) the establishment of adequate specific social services; and, finally (d) the adoption of minimum guarantees as regards employment, residence, and deportation."

NGOs should actively promote with governments use of the ILO recommendations in drawing up multilateral and bilateral agreements that deal with the migration of workers and problems concerning them and their families.

It was highly recommended that a nongovernmental mechanism be created for international sharing of knowledge concerning principles and methodologies regarding the resettlement of migrant and refugee children.

Support and strengthening of government efforts to share among governments information on successful and less successful experiences were strongly recommended.

National. It is the role of NGOs not only to interpret government policies but also to make recommendations based on their more intimate knowledge of unmet needs.

NGOs have an advocacy role on behalf of immigrants in ensuring protection of their legal and social rights, entitlement to education and other benefits enjoyed by all children in the receiving country.

NGOs should reach into neighborhoods and communities and involve other organizations and community groups in this work. NGOs should also engage the attention and interest of National Commissions of IYC and through the network of this body arouse the national consciousness on this subject. It would be worthwhile to obtain the collaboration of influential people to take a position and make it widely known to the public.

Local. Citizen groups should be encouraged to become involved in assisting newcomers in their adjustment process.

Work with human service systems (schools, health centers, courts, leisure programs) should be undertaken to develop sensitive and appropriate responses to the need of migrant children.

Migrant support systems should be stimulated, including exchanges among the leaders of the immigrant communities, and coalition action around issues of common concern should be encouraged.

The quality of human contacts by volunteers, so important in this process, should be improved, when necessary, especially in the initial stage of settlement.

The mother in migrant and refugee families may need special consideration since her adjustment to the host country can be difficult. Her feeling of insecurity may be a contributing factor to the child's inability to adjust.

An innovative suggestion was that there should be an ombudsman for refugees and migrants.

Keeping attention alive -- attention within their own ranks and among the general population -- is one of the crucial responsibilities of NGOs. NGOs with national or local structures should do their utmost to publicize information regarding meetings and other events concerned with migrants and refugees. NGOs should invite their constitu-

ents, where possible, to participate in these events or, at least, to support them. Too little use has been made of the public media in this respect.

2. Information and Communication

Between NGOs and Governments. Systems should be established whereby NGOs advise governments of NGO policies and activities that could be usefully taken over by government agencies or undertaken cooperatively by governments and NGOs.

Among NGOs. Information about ongoing NGO programs concerning children should be available, with special attention to the problem of uprootedness. There should be an exchange of experiences and methods that have proved successful. Information on results of certain approaches should be shared. Examine past experiences applicable to new refugee situations, including knowledge and skills useful in dealing with unaccompanied minors.

NGOs and the Community. NGOs should increase their community actions and inform the population systematically regarding problems of newcomers. Community groups should be encouraged to include migrants and refugees in their activities.

NGOs and Migrants. Governmental brochures should be supplemented by NGOs. Under the leadership of NGOs, person-to-person contact should be furthered. The feeling of isolation, so frequently prevalent among migrants and refugees, can be considerably relieved by continuous communication with the newcomer, by making him feel that the community cares.

Increasing Public Awareness. The problem should be defined in ways that will lead to changes in the attitudes in receiving countries and create sympathetic understanding and acceptance. This requires mutual education of the host community as well as of the migrant population. The importance of direct contacts between the new settlers and the

resident population is immense. Information on different cultures must be made available. Good contacts at the first stages of resettlement, especially, can make a unique impact on the migrant's adjustment. Such contacts can be undertaken by volunteers under the guidance of NGOs.

The public media can play a most constructive role. They should be utilized more effectively.

3. Resource and Information Centers

The group recommended establishment of resource centers which would serve as clearing centers for policies, programs, and activities by NGOs, and which should be available not only to NGOs but also to governments and intergovernmental agencies. Information on successful experiences, innovative actions, new patterns, and new mechanisms should be processed.

Consideration should be given to compilation of a bibliography of documentation on uprooted children.

4. Research

The need for research was repeatedly stressed. Lack of knowledge in various areas became apparent. It was felt that too little was known regarding the effectiveness of bilingual and bicultural education. More research is needed as to whether or not it is desirable for a whole family to migrate when the situation is temporary. What are the effects when the family accompanies the migrant and when the family is separated?

5. Symposium Follow-up

The distribution and future use of the Wingspread Report was considered, resulting in several suggestions:

a) The report of the Symposium should be distributed to all members of the NGO/IYC Committee and also to nonmember NGOs. It should be submitted to National Commissions and correspondents.

b) NGOs should be urged to distribute the report to their local and national memberships. Everything possible should be done to share ideas and expertise.

c) IYC National Commissions should be urged to study the report and to distribute it to their membership.

d) Groups involved in IYC should be alerted to the Wingspread meeting. They should be invited to share with others their successes and failures in alleviating uprootedness. Based on the results, further action should be developed, focusing especially on policies on behalf of migrant and refugee children.

e) It was recommended that the Wingspread report be translated into other languages.

f) Follow-up activities should be undertaken, such as conferences, meetings with experts, specific action on behalf of refugee and migrant children.

g) It was proposed that NGOs present a statement regarding their role in IYC when the United Nations General Assembly meets in 1979. The statement should be followed up by a substantive presentation to the United Nations in 1980 on all NGO activities, including their efforts regarding uprooted children. Perhaps an "expression of concern for uprooted migrant and refugee children" should be formulated.

h) While IYC will terminate at the end of 1979, and while interest in children will be intensive until then, the group of experts felt that it had set in motion a major consideration which needs to continue and can do so via the national committees of UNICEF, in case the National Commissions of IYC cease to exist. Other intergovernmental and nongovernmental agencies should be involved.

i) Whatever the forum, it was the consensus among the experts that there is a need for further study, further gathering of information among those active in the work with migrants and refugees. It was also the consensus that concern about these groups must be kept alive and that everything possible needs to be done to ease conflicts and problems in a humane, understanding, and knowledgeable

manner. It must not be forgotten that this concerns the future, the next generation. Everything possible must be done to help these children develop their fullest potential and become members of a society that accepts them whole-heartedly, and that they can fully accept.

It is the task of NGOs to follow up, to watch, and to act when others neglect or fail to take their responsibilites. The International Year of the Child is the time to start this important action.

International Year
of the Child 1979

THE WORKING PAPER

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The following brief considerations on the important topic of uprooted children do not pretend to deal with the total complexity of the subject. Discussing the plight of uprooted children would require a detailed picture of the many aspects of societies they live in, would necessitate an analysis of political, economic, and social patterns that influence them in their environment, would need study of the interaction process between individual and community.

The aim of this paper is only: (1) to outline some of the factors leading to uprootedness; (2) to identify some areas of special needs; and (3) to indicate some possibilities for action. Dealing with these fairly limited issues may form the basis for further discussion and the development of some coordinated action plans by various institutions to assist this group of children with their special needs.

Children have different psychological, intellectual, and emotional capacities, and the right of children to develop their potentials in a healthy, stable, and secure environment is universally recognized. Every individual's personality is formed by social and cultural traditions, religious values, specific behavior patterns, customs and habits typical to his culture, language, and so on. The phenomenon of uprootedness occurs when there is confrontation with a society that functions differently from the one to which the individual is accustomed -- a society where the child is forced to live for socioeconomic, political, or religious reasons. Such confrontation can be an extremely brutal and frustrating

experience, and children in particular may suffer damage to the development of their personality.

Children who show symptons of being uprooted can be found in all societies, and any movement may lead to the child being confronted with different demands and expectations with regard to his or her behavior. The movement may take place between rural and urban communities, between different social classes, between different neighborhoods in one and the same town. More dramatic, however, are the difficulties that children face when they are subjected to an international migration movement, where they must face a different culture.

For the purpose of this Symposium it may be justified to consider the consequences of children of international migratory movements as they occur today on all continents and between continents.

Essentially, it can be said that migratory movements are usually a consequence of complex socioeconomic and/or political developments. They should be considered as a symptom of unequal opportunities for people to develop their personalities, their family life, their economic status, and so forth, according to their capacities and interests.

Normally, family groups migrate, and it is possible to distinguish two basic forms of voluntary migration -- permanent and temporary.

Permanent Migration. In this case the family makes a conscious decision to change its country of residence in search of better opportunities. Such moves are usually planned and organized, based on the intention to start a new life in another country. There is willingness to change, adjust, and integrate.

Temporary Migration. Here the migrant intends to leave only for a limited period of time to achieve a specific goal, and his intention is to return home sooner or later. The

attitudes of this migrant group toward adjustment, toward the foreign environment, are substantially different from those of permanent migrants, and there is less motivation to integrate effectively with the new society.

It has to be said that during recent years the distinctions between temporary and permanent movements have gradually been disappearing. Modern means of communication, dissemination of information, and the higher educational levels facilitate return to the country of origin even from far distant places. Countries that traditionally receive permanent migrants note increasingly that these immigrants frequently plan to return home after a certain time span, such as when personal goals have been achieved or when they retire. On the other hand, so-called "temporary" movements very often result in permanent changes of residence.

Refugee movements are not migrations of free choice. The family is forced to change its country of residence and in most situations cannot even choose where it wishes to resettle. The attitude vis-a-vis a new country is overshadowed by a deep sense of loss of a supportive and familiar environment and an unwillingness to accept another place as home.

Children normally move with a family group, or at least with one family member, but it should be mentioned that in the course of certain refugee movements children come across borders alone. Another international movement, one that affects only children, can be observed in the context of intercountry adoptions.

Regardless of what type of movement one considers, three distinct concepts can be defined with regard to the behavior of the migrant and his family in his new environment.

Assimilation. Certain countries would like to see the migrants merge completely into the mainstream of their new country. This expectation was particularly strong in tra-

ditional immigration countries, accustomed to permanent migrants, and it is a demand still placed on most refugees.

Integration. Under this concept migrants can and should preserve some features of their past, while they are at the same time requested to find a place in the new society. A long process of mutual adjustment between society and newcomer is expected to take place.

Adaptation. Temporary migrants are expected to find a place for themselves in a new society, but the interaction is only superficial and the migrant essentially remains in his own culture.

Against this background of varied types of migration and conflicting demands and expectations one has to see the child who is involved in a migratory movement.

Migrants in any society are a marginal group, and children are on the margin of this marginal group. Children of migrants are economically not productive; they require a special infrastructure; their differences are an additional burden for the host country. More than their adult family members they are isolated, restricted to their homes, to relationships with those from the same country of origin.

Children of migrants are displaced. They were moved, most of the time without adequate preparation, from one culture to another. They are exposed to different behavior patterns, to a different language. They are confronted with different houses, different food, different games, different clothes. They find themselves unable to communicate; they miss the protection of a familiar environment; they suffer from homesickness. They may be rejected as foreigners; they may be confronted with stereotyped images of their home country; they may be exposed to incomprehensible and cruel jokes; they may have to experience loneliness, isolation, and frustration. And, of course, there are the parents, the persons on whose security, guidance, and examples they most

rely, whose attention they most need for a healthy development. But the parents, very frequently, are themselves overwhelmed with the difficulties of coping with a foreign environment.

Migrants, when they arrive in their new country, very often live in temporary quarters or move to cheap accommodations. Housing conditions are inadequate. Serious health and social problems are the consequences of overcrowded and unsanitary housing. Traditional cultural patterns and housekeeping habits break down, frustrating for the mother and for the child.

Food is another factor that strongly influences the life of the child and his family. Eating habits have long traditions in all cultures, and the adjustment to different food causes serious problems and may lead to bad eating habits with consequent emotional and health disturbances.

Interaction and interrelationship depend on language. The opportunity for the child to learn the foreign language will influence the possibilities for him to become part of the educational structure, to communicate in a meaningful way with his new environment. The attitude of the parents is crucial here.

The contacts with the surrounding community are of utmost importance, but these contacts, such as those with doctors, teachers, priests, lawyers, social and health services, are frequently strongly influenced by culture-bound reactions. Attitudes toward illness, stress, and unhappiness are based on traditional value systems, religious convictions. Different concepts of authority, outside help, individual rights, and so on lead to misunderstandings, tensions, resentments.

Parents and children are faced with these problems in addition to that of making a living. Children generally adjust well to different situations, but when confronted

with such substantial changes in their lives they need secure guidance and additional emotional support from their family. Only too often neither the parents nor the receiving society can provide this assistance and support.

The child will show all the symptons of an uprooted child. It will be ill more frequently than its peers; it will speak neither language well; it will not show any interest in formal education; its communication with other children will be characterized by withdrawal or aggression; its relationship with the family group will be insecure, lacking trust and confidence. The child will lose its cultural identity without obtaining a new one.

It has to be stressed that these problems are all particularly severe for the children of the so-called second generation, that is, of the children born in the new country. Naturally, these children are more inclined to compare their situation with children of the same age born to parents of the indigenous population.

The difficulties of the uprooted child are further aggravated when there is no decision as to whether the family stays or returns; when there is constant threat that the environment may change again; when there is a permanent situation of being on the move.

In this context it is necessary to pay attention to another group of children, the children left behind in the home country. When adults (parents) decide to migrate to another country, they are not always able to take all their children with them but plan to have them come at a later date. This does not always happen, which means that these children are uprooted in a different sense by being left behind.

These children, who would probably be living with grandparents, would have lost their family ties. When again meeting their parents, who might return on vacation, they would encounter new values and would feel the loss of emotional

links with the parents. They would experience a communication gap with their own sisters and brothers who live in the receiving country -- a communication gap because of differences in educational systems.

When sisters and brothers are born in the receiving country, the child left behind becomes a total stranger to his/her own family.

Numerous institutions and organizations, governmental and nongovernmental, have attempted to study the social and cultural consequences of migration, have considered the situation of the uprooted child. Legislation, financial and technical assistance, collection and exchange of information, educational measures, specialized services, communication facilities, and so on, have been developed, but still there are uprooted children who should receive special attention. Only too often the uprooted child, being the weakest link in the family unit, is considered only in the context of the over-all migration phenomenon.

NGOs could perform a special role in assisting these children. There are possibilities for action on three different levels.

On the policy level the movement of children, in whatever context, should receive special attention in the over-all social and economic development plan of a country. The specific short- and long-term problems of children moved from culture to culture could be brought to the knowledge of policy-makers and planners by informed NGOs which are child-oriented.

Both sending and receiving countries have responsibility toward the children on the move, since they will constitute either the future workers of one country or a loss of development potential. Governments should be obliged to consider the over-all situation of children when setting policies. Conflicting and changing trends and attitudes in

governmental plans, mostly dictated by purely economic reasons, create a climate of insecurity and hostility which endangers the child in movement -- the child is both losing and forgetting the culture of the sending country while the receiving country is not recognizing the child as a future fellow national.

On another level NGOs should give highest priority to activating creative and innovative methods to facilitate communication among children of different countries. Educational measures in the largest sense of the word, using all modern means available, could be devised, to stimulate effective and mutually satisfactory learning processes. Bridges between children of varying backgrounds in formal and informal settings could certainly prevent the occurrence of many problems. Preferably, such actions should take place at the grass-roots level since there they could really be adjusted to the needs of the community.

Last but not least, the operation of efficient service agencies, small, specialized, and geared to the needs of uprooted children, could be a task for NGOs in the social welfare field -- again, particularly at the local level.

NGOs must stimulate volunteer programs that motivate inhabitants of the receiving country to train and support children in migration. These volunteers are a very important link in the migration process of the child: through their action they diminish the distance between the (very often prejudiced) population and the insecure child. Individual tutoring, parent groups at school, informal encounter groups (for local and foreign parents), youth clubs, and so forth, are very valuable steps for both sides in the direction of more understanding, more tolerance; valuable steps toward giving the child a chance to have a more positive existence in the new environment.

Such services could assist children to overcome initial adjustment problems, could provide the security and guidance needed to establish a meaningful relationship with the new neighborhood. The basic aim of such services has to be protection of the rights of the child.

Richard A. Schnuer, Ruud van Hoogevest, Edward B. Marks

WINGSPREAD CONFERENCE ON UPROOTED CHILDREN

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WINGSPREAD

The building Frank Lloyd Wright called Wingspread, situated on a rolling prairie site just north of Racine, Wisconsin, was designed in 1938 as a residence for the Johnson family. In 1960, through the gift of Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Johnson, it became the headquarters of The Johnson Foundation and began its career as an educational conference center.

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The rolling expanse of the Midwestern prairies was considered a natural setting for Wingspread. In the limitless earth the architect envisioned a freedom and movement. The name Wingspread was an expression of the nature of the house, reflecting aspiration through spread wings - a symbol of soaring inspiration.

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